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SUBJECT: EAST AFRICAN COMMON MARKET: GRADUALISM IN ACTION

¶1. The five East African Community (EAC) Heads of State, at a summit meeting April 29 in Arusha, announced a delay in the planned signing of the long-negotiated Common Market Protocol until their next summit in November 2009. The leaders' agreement on the final outstanding issues of the protocol came at the expense of three areas of integration resisted firmly by Tanzania. In effect, Tanzania's neighbors' citizens will be denied ownership of Tanzanian land, the right to permanent residence after five years residence, and entry to Tanzania without a passport. The presidents agreed that individual countries within the EAC could sign bilateral agreements on the use of national IDs as travel documents.

¶2. Final negotiations among the Heads of State took three hours longer than scheduled, leaving a large collection of ministers, ambassadors, and other dignitaries waiting in the halls outside. When the summit's formal session finally opened, Rwandan President Kagame announced that he would deliver a single statement, his four colleagues having set aside their scheduled speeches. The communique (faxed to AF/EX) was greeted with muted applause. The atmosphere after the session ended was notable for its lack of enthusiasm, although several of the EAC ambassadors expressed relief that their leaders had concluded the agreement. The Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, Abidrahim Abdi, expressed surprise that Tanzania had stood fast on all three issues, not even giving ground on passport-free travel in the region.

ANDRE